

## **Traveling With a Service Dog to Hawaii**

Hawaii has been and continues to be very strict when allowing service dogs, and all pets, to travel to our islands as Hawaii does not have rabies and ticks that can cause Lyme disease.

Understandably, the state wants to keep it that way!! Accordingly, there are several steps one must take well in advance when traveling with service animals. There are a few interrelated steps, so you may read a few points a couple times. Also, in this version is a short address to the new U.S. Department of Transportation regulations pertaining to airline travel with service dogs.

As you read this, you will see there are many considerations about which island to fly in to, as all but Honolulu have special required agriculture check-in charges that can really be costly. If you fly into Honolulu, there are no special charges. In some cases, if your destination is one of the neighbor islands, it may be less expensive to fly into Honolulu first, then buy connecting island flight tickets. The fees can be even higher at the outer islands if you arrive evenings, weekends or holidays. Because the fees can change quickly, I am providing the contact info for each island. In all cases, if you have any questions about these processes, please know I would be glad to talk you through them.

Please check with both Hawaiian Airlines and Southwest for the costs of flights from Honolulu to our other islands.

### **First, Communicate with Hawaii's Quarantine Department!**

When planning a trip to Hawaii, you must communicate your travel plans with our State's Agriculture Department's Quarantine Office. (See contact info below). Usually, the arrangements should be made six weeks or more, prior to arrival. I recommend two months at least. There are a lot of good reasons this is required.

Let them know of all the specifics of your planned trip. In what city you will be arriving; How, by plane or ship? Provide all your contact information: address, telephone (home and cell) and email addresses. Describe your service dog, breed, and name, and where it was trained. Provide all airline (or cruise) info, flight number, dates, and times. Provide all your hotel information with addresses, or, if visiting friends, their addresses. Provide telephone numbers too. If this is your first trip to Hawaii, also make a copy of your GDB I.D., front and back and send that as well. Quarantine will create a file for you and your dog. Send this by fax and e-mail!

This is **only** the beginning of your contacts with Quarantine.

## Where To Arrive In Hawaii

We encourage visitors with service dogs to arrive through our Honolulu International Airport (“HNL”) as the inspection is free, and the State’s vet techs are there to help. If you ask for and are granted (almost automatically when given enough advance notice), “terminal inspection” (available only in Honolulu), you will be greeted at the gate as you are leaving the plane. To get “terminal inspection” you must make an emailed or faxed request at least 1 month or more, prior to arrival. Terminal inspection is only available when arriving in Honolulu between 8:00AM and 4:00PM. If you arrive before or after those hours, you will be transported to the quarantine office on the airport grounds and the quarantine office staff will take care of your check-in.

If you choose to travel directly to a neighbor Island, you will still need to make special arrangements through the Quarantine office so that an authorized veterinarian can check your dog in upon arrival. If you should arrive at Kauai, Maui, Kona or Hilo directly from the mainland, you will have to verify with the State Quarantine Office in Honolulu who is authorized to check your guide upon arrival. At this time, when arriving in Maui, Kauai and the Big Island of Hawaii, your contact will be with the Humane Society on those Islands. As of this time, the fee for this on Maui is \$200, and for Kauai, it is \$450. It is very different on Hawaii Island, and the fee can range from \$150 - \$450, if not more. I provide below the current contact information for those Islands, and it is important that you check with the State Quarantine Office because changes can always be made!

## What Do You Need to Be Prepared With?

**Rabies vaccination:** Rabies vaccination should be current. If the vaccination is nearing 3 years old, your guide should have a new vaccination that is good for another 3 years.

**Titer test:** Titer test is a must. This blood work is taken at your vet’s office, and then Fed-Ex’d to Kansas State University OR Auburn University for analysis. **(THIS IS NEW: Kansas State has been receiving increasing numbers of test requests. The result has caused some significant delays in its processing. Unfortunately, some test results were not received in time, and travelling animals have been taken away on arrival and put into quarantine. Kansas processing can take up to two months. So, Auburn University has been added as an approved processor. They can now process in only about three to four weeks. It is critical that your veterinarian lets them know that this is for a service dog. Please give this new information to your veterinarian. Most veterinarians know the Kansas contact info. Here is the contact information for Auburn University:**

### Auburn University

**Serology - Virology Lab**

**261 Greene Hall**

**1130 Wire Road**

**Auburn University, Alabama 36849-5519**

**Telephone 334-844-2659**

**Email: [Virology@vetmed.auburn.edu](mailto:Virology@vetmed.auburn.edu)**

**Manager contact: Theresa Wood**

The titer measures the antibodies your dog has to resist rabies. They then will send the results to both your veterinarian and to the Quarantine office here in Honolulu. This test can take from 1 month to 2 months for processing, so it is always best to do it as soon as possible once you are firming up your travel plans. PLEASE NOTE: Your dog's microchip number MUST accompany the titer test submittal. The titer test results are good for 3 years.

**Microchip:** A microchip is also a requirement for travel to Hawaii as well as other countries. Now, all the guide dogs from GDB are microchipped, so this will not be a problem. Please make sure that the microchip for your dog is one that can also be used for international travel destinations.

**Health Certificate:** Health Certificates must be issued by your veterinarian within 10 days of your departure date. Besides information about the overall good health of your dog, the certificate needs to show the rabies vaccination info, the titer results, microchip number and verify that flea and tick medications have been administered. Please have your vet clinic make at least an original and two copies. The original Health Certificate MUST be given to the vet tech from the quarantine department upon arrival. One copy is for the airline. Some airlines, such as Hawaiian Airlines, require you to present a copy when checking in to a flight to Hawaii. Be sure to keep the third copy with you for your records. This Health Certificate is good for 30 days.

**More Information On Requesting Terminal Inspection:** A request for terminal inspection must be done AT LEAST One (1) month or more prior to arrival. Terminal inspection is very convenient way as the vet tech will check your guide upon arrival at the gate. PLEASE REMEMBER, terminal inspection is only good if your arrival is between 8:00AM and 4:00PM in Honolulu. Otherwise, you and your guide will be met at the gate by the airline representative or someone from Quarantine in the Dept. of Agriculture. You will be taken to a Quarantine Office location by a van or, if it is close enough, it may involve a short 10 minute walk to the satellite quarantine office.

**What to Expect From Quarantine Upon Arrival:** Present the health certificate to whomever is checking your dog in. Be aware that they will also inspect it for fleas and ticks. Regardless how

you are checked in, once you've presented the health certificate, you will usually be out of there in 5 to 10 minutes.

**AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT:** If the person from Quarantine is not at the gate when you arrive, it will likely be that the person may be running a few minutes late because of a crowded schedule due to more and more arrivals of individuals with service animals. Call the airport Quarantine office to make sure they are on the way. That number is 808-837-8092. It is possible that some well-meaning, but uninformed staff with an airlines may erroneously say just go ahead to baggage. This has happened once that I know of. NO!! **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE are you to leave the gate area until Quarantine arrives.**

**FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP!!** The follow-up is so very important. The Quarantine staff is extremely busy so after faxing and emailing travel plan information, please leave a message on the phone and send another email to make sure the staff has everything that is needed for your guide. I have found it best to email rather than call, as personnel does not call out of state. In the email, let them know the date, time and airline and flight number, and hotel information. If you should travel to another island, let them know that too. You will not be required to show the Health Certificate flying between islands. Also, when leaving either from Honolulu or the other islands back to the mainland, the Health Certificate usually doesn't need to be shown, nor any special arrangements need to be made. The state is only worried about animals entering the state. But, that said, please always keep a copy of the health certificate with you during your trip.

**Cruising to Hawaii:** When cruising to Hawaii, follow the guidelines as if you were flying to a Hawaii destination. When sending an email to [Rabiesfree@hawaii.gov](mailto:Rabiesfree@hawaii.gov), send your entire cruise itinerary, and mention your first port of call. You will not have to call to arrange for a vet tech or a veterinarian to meet you and your guide, as the Honolulu vet techs will notify the authorized veterinarian and staff of your arrival. Prior to your cruise, send an email to [Rabiesfree@hawaii.gov](mailto:Rabiesfree@hawaii.gov) to re-confirm with the Dept. of Agriculture/Quarantine Office that it has made the arrangements for check in. Usually, the night before docking at your first port of call, someone on the ship will notify you and will ask you to meet at a certain area to meet the authorized personnel. Present the original health certificate and the vet tech will inspect your guide for fleas and ticks between the toes, and may lift the fur backwards to check for fleas. Your dog will be wanded to check on the microchip number, and the inspection is completed. You can be off to enjoy your land excursions.

Please know that your cruiseline will also expect its own copy of your dog's credentials and Health Certificate.

### **Preparing To Take Your Trip To Hawaii:**

**Grooming and Feeding:** It is critical that your dog be well groomed just a day or so before traveling. This includes a good brushing, and cleaning with non-allergenic baby wipes, or even a bath if necessary. As a courtesy to other passengers, your dog must not have any odor of any kind.

When traveling with your guide, always think of the comfort of your guide at all times. When traveling from your departure city during the early hours, do not feed your dog. When first getting up, relieve your guide first at home. Then again at the airport. (When I travel with my guide, the shuttle drops me off very early, so I would check in my bag, and wait about an hour prior to my pre-boarding time to relieve my dog. Pre-boarding time is usually about 45 to 50 minutes before actual flight time. This way, your guide is completely empty and will be comfortable in flight.)

When traveling early or mid-afternoon, it will be better to feed your guide about 1/3 cup of its kibble with little water very early in the morning. This helps the dog not to be so empty as that can cause a bile problem.

Here is an example of how I feed my guide when leaving in an afternoon. I feed him 1/3 cup at 6:00AM, relieve him, then relieve again around 9:00AM, and relieve him at the airport. He now has gotten into the habit where he will urinate twice and defecate once. He is totally empty for a 5 ½ hours flight on the plane. If there is a layover and it is 2 or more hours, try to relieve your guide IMMEDIATELY upon arrival .... so you can have enough time to get checked back in through TSA in time to continue your travel. Today, most airports have relieving areas past the TSA check-in so as not to worry about going outside to relieve your dog. I have heard and by personnel experience with my guide, some dogs do not like to use the indoor relieving area. I believe it is due to the fact that it is in a room, and in some cases, the smell can be a bit overwhelming. Please remember not to walk or exercise your dog during a short layover as that will only stimulate your dog.

**Food for travel:** Pack each ration of food into a snack or sandwich zip bag. This way, you can feed your dog if you are out and about, decide to go out for dinner and you will be able to feed your dog around the same time.

Always pack extra food for an extra 2 days just in case your flight is cancelled or delayed for a long period of time.

It is a good practice to pack the food and the bowl in your rolling backpack or another hand-carry luggage. Packing all of the food into your suitcase is okay, but if your suitcase gets lost, then it will be so unfortunate for your dog. If you are visiting for a long period, you can also pack the food into a Priority box and send it on ahead. I travel with a rolling backpack that holds all of Buddy's

food and as well as my own medications. In the backpack, also pack the grooming tools, ear wash and any medication your dog needs. Depending on the size of the liquid, you may need to remove it for inspection at TSA.

I always bring the baby wipes to keep my guide clean. The Kirkland brand baby wipes at Costco are great as they have aloe in them and have no alcohol.

**Other Helpful Tips:** Bring the Heartguard and Frontline Plus or Advantage if travel goes into the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

I highly recommend bringing a fleece mat or some sort of lightweight blanket for your guide to lie on during the flight. Not only is it something that is familiar from home, but it will protect your dog from the harsh chemicals that are needed to clean the floor of the aircraft.

I recommend you bring along your guide's Nyla-bone or a toy as a distraction. Be sure the toy is NOT a loud squeaker toy! :o) (All three of my guides go to sleep as soon as I put the fleece pad down and are not interested in chewing or the toy).

**ALSO** Bring a Flexy leash so your dog can romp around and play when outdoors. If your dog likes to swim in the ocean, it is safer to have your dog always on the Flexy leash. Do not go in the water if it is murky. There can be a problem with the Tiger sharks in our waters when murky and they can come in as shallow as 3ft. Also, especially on Kauai, Maui and Hawaii Island, the riptide can be extremely dangerous, so watch out for any warning signs to this effect.

**When leaving Hawaii:** The Honolulu Airport is the perfect one for our guides as it has two gardens to relieve the dogs that are located past security. There is a Japanese garden located in the middle of the terminal, and there is also a park like garden located towards the west end in the Hawaiian Air terminal. The airport is now creating some special "relieving areas" at the gardens, so look for those too. Those leaving via Hawaiian Air will find the park setting the best place to relieve your guide. We ask that you please be very discrete when relieving your dog there. Pick a quiet corner ... and please keep it clean, picking up ALL of the poopie!

There are also patches of grass outside of baggage claim as well. But if you use them before the flight, be aware of the time it takes to clear TSA afterward.

### **Contact the Department of Agriculture:**

When all of the flights are confirmed, fax the quarantine dept. first thing.

The fax number is: 808-483-7161

Phone: 808-483-7154

e-mail: [rabiesfree@hawaii.gov](mailto:rabiesfree@hawaii.gov)

[Neighbor Island contacts:](#)

[Send your itinerary and necessary information to: Rabiesfree@hawaii.gov](#)

[Must request 30 days in advance for terminal inspection.](#)

Maui:

**Maui Humane Society - 808-856-9454 contact person is Jay.**

**e-mail: [quarantine@mauihumanesociety.org](mailto:quarantine@mauihumanesociety.org)**

Kauai:

**Kauai Humane Society -808-632-0610**

**e-mail: [kauaihumane.org](http://kauaihumane.org)**

**Big Island - Kona:**

.....  
**1) Alii Veterinary Hospital - Kailua, Kona 1-808-329-8999**

**2) Keauhou Veterinary Hospital -808-322-2988**  
.....

Please let me know if you have any questions that I can provide additional information on.

**IMPORTANT NEW INFORMATION:** It is critical to also note that effect 2021, the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) issued entirely new regulations regarding airline travel with service dogs.

At a high level, the main changes are:

1. Only dogs will now be considered as service animals.
2. Airlines are now only required to allow legitimate service dogs to travel with their partners in the cabin. No longer are airlines going to be required to allow emotional support animals in the cabin. That said, it is likely that some airlines will make a business decision to allow emotional support animals in the cabin if the handler is willing to pay special fee. The bottom line here is that service dog handlers will see a marked decrease in dogs in the cabin that are not service dogs.
3. Two new documentation forms have been created that must now be completed in advance when traveling with a service dog. The forms are all available on-line at each airline's website. These forms are due up to 48 hours prior to flight unless otherwise noted. For flights

booked less than 48 hours ahead of time, such as when traveling last minute due to an emergency, forms must be presented at airport. The separate forms cover two self attestations the handler must make: A. Certifying that the dog has been trained to be a service dog, and B. For flights longer than 8 1/2 hours, that the handler can assure the animal will not relieve, but if it does, will be responsible. People should not be intimidated by the forms. **They are very short and simple to complete, BUT they are not that easily accessible to the blind. I really advise you have a sighted person assist you.**

As to how long the forms will stay in effect on a particular trip, or if they will be okay for connecting flights, each airline has its own policy. So there are no unpleasant surprises, it is critical that the traveler be proactive well in advance in communicating with the airlines when planning a trip.

**THIS IS NEW INPUT: While each airline uses the same DOT forms, they each have their own very strict processes. I cannot caution you enough that you communicate, communicate, communicate with your airlines. We know of one horrific example where an airline actually removed a passenger with a service dog from its plane, saying she had not properly followed its pre-registering requirements. The airlines, Alaska, which is a very friendly airline to service dogs, said the person had not provided them with the required copy its confirmation notice, and hadn't confirmed back to it within a sufficient time. So, as I said, it is absolutely critical that you talk with your airline to be certain all requirements are being met.**

Much aloha, and have safe travels and much fun in our islands!

Vickie Kennedy